

THE POWER BIFURCATION OF A CHANGING CHINESE VILLAGE
IN HONG KONG

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Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Sociology
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Philosophy

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Acknowledgement is due to the villagers in So Kun Wat Village for providing the basis of this study.

I should like to express my appreciation to Dr. S.K. Lau who served as the advisor for this study and gave helpful advice and criticism in the preparation of this work. I should also like to thank Miss Barbara E. Ward for going over the manuscript and offering valuable suggestions. It is my pleasure publicly to acknowledge an indebtedness to the officials of the Agriculture and Fisheries Department and of the Tuen Mun District Office, the village representatives, and the chairman of the Farming Association, all of whom offered co-operation without which this study would have been impossible,

ABSTRACT

This is an empirical case study of the power structure of a changing Chinese village in the New Territories. It is found that the formal --- in the sense of being officially recognized --- communication channel is monopolized by pen-t'u-jen, who are the offspring of the original inhabitants in the district before 1898 (the beginning of the lease,) whereas the outsiders, who are the rest of the inhabitants in the area beside the pen-t'u-jen, are not able to participate in this institution. In the past, representatives elected by the pen-t'u-jen, through delicate dispensation of the resources derived from their positions, ensured their leaderships upon the villagers, including the outsiders. However, changes in the economic and demographic elements of the native social structure in the late decades, together with the shift in the government policy to develop the New Territories in the present stage, have brought forth a discrepancy in the interest between the pen-t'u-jen and the outsiders in regard to the government's development plans. Outsiders, though still unable to have a share in the formal communication channel, resort to a farming association --- a kind of non-political organiza-

tion --- to establish their connection with the District Office. The leader of this association also receives recognition from the District Officials of his role as an intermediate channel between the outsiders and the District Office because of his existing influence upon the outsiders, which is of help to the officials in their mediation with the outsider. As a result, the leader has partly superseded the function of the village representatives, and increased his influence upon the outsider group in the village; whereas the representatives can only secure their influence upon the pen-t'u-jen through their positions. Thus a power bifurcation has emerged in the social structure of the village at the present stage.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

I. Rural leadership in Chinese villages during the early period of British rule in the New Territories was, more or less, the same as in other Chinese villages elsewhere in the past. Gentry, people of letters, and ¹fu-lao, were the prominent local leaders as a consequence of the lack of penetration by the government administration (Ch'u T'ung-tsu 1962). This pattern of leadership remained much the same for at least the first few decades in the leased district (Kuan, Lau 1979, p 4)

It remained relatively unaltered until the fifties, when a large number of refugees migrated to Hong Kong because of the hardships in life in China after the civil war, and the New Territories began to undergo successive social and economic changes. Immigration both from China and from the urban settings inside the Colony caused high increases in the population size of New Territories. The industrialization in Tsuen Wan in the late 1940's also set off tremendous changes in the economic sphere. The shift in colonial policy from leaving the New Territories as a basically separate rural 'hinterland' to developing them in

order to meet the internal social needs of Hong Kong society as a whole, although it emerged only in the last two decades, was critical in the sense that the large resumptions of land necessary for development could be contradictory to the interests of the rural inhabitants, and signified the penetration of government forces into the native realm. These drastic changes in the social structure of the New Territories as a whole were bound to have a serious impact upon its elements, in whatever directions. Thus, it is necessary to review the trends in recent changes in the rural society before we can fully understand the present situation.

This thesis is concerned with changes in the leadership in a Chinese village in the New Territories, and particular emphasis will be placed upon outsiders' participation in the native power structure. 'Outsider' is used to designate people who moved there after 1898 and their descendants as opposed to the 'insiders', or those who lived there before British rule and their offspring. The latter are usually identified as pen-t'u-jen². Such a classification would not be of much significance if it were only a matter of difference in the sequence of migration without disparities in other social aspects. In fact, however, due to the protection over the indigenous people in Colonial Government policy, there are in the strict sense, political and economic discriminations between these two kinds of people, although both are

Chinese and often even speak the same dialects. Economically, the pen-t'u-jen enjoy a number of privileges over their land and housing; politically, they monopolize the officially recognized power structure, which is embodied in the Heung Yee Kuk, District Rural Committee, and Village Representative System³. However, as a result of successive migrations, the proportion of outsiders in the New Territories is much higher than that of pen-t'u-jen at the present time; they are still excluded from participation in the officially recognized political framework. Such differentiations would probably not, or not necessarily, lead to problematic situations if there were no other conflicts between the interests of the pen-t'u-jen and the outsiders, since most citizens in Hong Kong also do not enjoy such privileges or feel the necessity to have them, but, the development plans in the New Territories which initiated large resumptions of land in the leased district did have an impact upon the lives of certain outsiders, and the inadequacy of such a political system was thus uncovered. The collective action taken by some outsiders in New Territories in the form of press meetings, protests and even fighting in the past years were perhaps obvious indications of the seriousness of the situation.

With consideration of these existing loopholes in the political framework in the New Territories, the researcher hoped to study their consequences upon the

local power structure, and to discover how the outsiders adjust to this inequity.

As most new towns in the New Territories are more like urban societies, their leadership patterns are likely to differ from those in the villages for a number of intricate reasons, including the mixed nature of their populations' and the complex urban life pattern. Therefore, the analysis here is limited to the village level, no attempt will be made to generalize to the new town level.

II So Kun Wat Village was selected as the case for our analysis because of a number of considerations. Fortunately, the nature of the case fulfilled our ideal conditions for an experimental study. First, it is a village comprising both pen-t'u-jen and outsiders. Secondly, because of its closeness to Tusen Wan, an early developed town, the villagers have experienced the impact of the early industrialization. Thirdly, the village's proximity to Tuen Mun, another New Town, and its being included in the layout of development, render it directly susceptible to the consequences of the latest government policy. In this sense, the selected village is an ideal case to examine the influences of the three variables -- the economic change, the population growth, and the penetration of government agencies.

III. The researcher, a member of the outsider group in

the Village, had lived there for about seventeen years before leaving for college education; and went back to the community for two years' intensive participant observation. Data were gathered through observations, interviews with both outsiders and pen-t'u-jen, and the village representatives, the chairman of the farming association, District Officials, and officials in the Agriculture and Fisheries Department.

The researcher's role as also a member of the village has been helpful in a number of ways. Throughout the actual field work, genuine co-operation was offered by both the outsiders and pen-t'u-jen in the village, this was perhaps due to the researcher's long acquaintance with them. Not many introductions were needed to establish a relationship between interviewees and the researcher, and the villagers were all willing to converse with the researcher. At the same time, many cases that happened in the past and are central to our study were first traced through the researcher's memory, and were used as guidelines to formulate subsequent structured interviews. In this way, many useful data were gathered, with the reliability ascertained to a certain degree. Moreover, the researcher's long period of participation and being a member of the village enabled him to share similar perceptions with local people of most issues that happened in the village. Being able to perceive the meaning of social events from an insiders' perspective did offer a great help to later

interpretations in our study. Nevertheless, the researcher was also aware of the risk of his insider's role to the objectivity of his findings. In most cases, however, the researcher's own perceptions were further demonstrated by responses from local villagers, thus obviating at least in part the potential bias derived from his own value commitment.

Notes

1. fu-lao (父 老) are people of seniority in age or geneological order.
2. pen-t'u-jen (本土人), the other terms used in the village to refer to this group of people include punti-jen or pen-t'i-jen (本地人), but as these latter terms are generally used in Hong Kong to refer to Cantonese, the term pen-t'u-jen is used here for the sake of clarity.
3. For details, see the 1972-1973 Annual Departmental Report of the New Territories Administration, para. 57-62.

CHAPTER II

The Village

So Kun Wat Village lies in a small valley located about 18 miles north of Kowloon, on the side of the Castle Peak Bay. The high hills and seaside are the natural boundaries which separate it from adjacent villages. The Tai Lam Chun reservoir, constructed in the fifties, is situated to the northeast of the community. A small river which connects the reservoir and the seashore runs through the whole village. The Castle Peak Road, at the mouth of the village, unites it with Kowloon and nearby new towns - Tsuen Wan, Tuen Mun and Yuen Long.

The population of the village at the present time is estimated by the District Office as about 5,500, with 560 household units¹; average family size is about 10 persons. The proportion of pen-t'u-jen is believed to be 1,500, with 125 household units. The remaining others are all outsiders, 200 household units of whom are farmers, producing vegetables and poultry. The rest of the outsiders are mainly workers, most of them engaged in various occupations outside the the village.

The pen-t'u-jen are composed of three lineage with different surnames. The Lees have 60 household units, the Chans about 55, and the Chins only 10. They all speak the

same kind of Hakka dialect, the origin of which is from Tam-shui in Kwangtung. The residence of these pen-t'u-jen is located at the inner part of the village, a flat area; whereas all the outsiders are scattered among the outer parts of the village, most of them residing along the hillsides, or near the seashore. Because of the proximity of the outsider's residence to the seashore, they are also designated as hai-sha-jen² in addition to wai-ti-jen³, whereas the pen-t'u-jen are called wei-tau-jen⁴. A small shrine to the earth god under a big tree at the road side marks the internal boundary between these two groups of people. It was found that no outsiders had ever been allowed to reside or to bury their ancestors inside the pen-t'u-jen's realm.

The outsiders, part of whom migrated to the village as early as 1949, comprise of various ethnic groups. The dominant two are Waiyang, Lufung, the others include Hai-fung, Teo Chiu, Tungkwan⁵. The surnames among them are Chu, Lau, Chung, Pang, Wong, Law. This list is by no means complete because the outsiders are indeed very complicated as they migrated from various places at different stages. In fact, a number of the outsiders migrated from the same village in China, some of them are even relatives or members of the same lineage in their original village. These kinds of relationship make significant social ties that link up these people into different segments.

The total area of the arable land of So Kun Wat Village is about 140 acres, the ownership of which include Crown land and private land. 'Crown land' refers to land belonging to the Hong Kong Government, whereas private land belongs to ordinary people. Villagers who are cultivating Crown land obtain a permit of use from the District Office, and submit a small sum of tax at the end of each year. In this way, they have the right to cultivate the land but not to sell it. Private land in the village is mainly occupied by the pen-t'u-jen, whereas Crown land is used by outsiders. The difference in ownership is in fact a consequence of the Government policy. When the New Territories Administration was first established, a land survey was conducted and local villagers were summoned to register their land. The lots registered at that time were recognized as private land, whereas all the rest of the land in the village became Crown land owned by the Hong Kong Government. Outsiders, who moved to the village at a later stage, brought much of the hillside and fringe land into cultivation by their own labour; but, the ownership of this newly cultivated land still belongs to the Government in the name of Crown land. As a result, land occupied by outsiders is scattered among hillsides and is less fertile; whereas land owned by pen-t'u-jen is concentrated in the flat area, comparatively more suitable for cultivation. Nevertheless, the village did undergo many changes in its economic activities, which subsequently

affected ownership over the land. The pattern of land use will be better comprehended if we trace through the history of the village.

Since the coming of the British Government, So Kun Wat Villagers experienced a great many changes. Thus, in order to understand the current situation more completely, an analysis of its previous historical stages is first necessary. For this purpose, we attempt to describe the historical social background of the village so as to present a more adequate picture, which may help our understanding. We shall trace as far as back to the beginning of the establishment of British Government in the New Territories. In chronological order this history of the village may be divided into four stages. From 1898 to 1949 was the first period, in which the exclusive dominance was in the hands of pen-t'u-jen. The second stage was the period when outsiders moved in from around 1950-1957. The third one is from 1958-1969, a period of relative stability. The fourth is the current stage, when land values have soared and inequality has become obvious. This classification may appear somewhat arbitrary, but it is made for heuristic purposes. The lines drawn here do not indicate that there are clear-cut separations between each period, but rather that some dramatic events which are central to our analysis have occurred.

The First Stage 1898-1949

The New Territories was leased to the British Government at the beginning of this stage. At that time, the only inhabitants in this district were pen-t'u-jen. The village was already inhabited by the three lineages - the Lees, Chans, Chins. Their ancestors moved there from Kwangtung as early as at the late eighteenth century⁶. The population then was estimated to be about four to five hundred. The major economic activity at that time was two-crop rice farming, sweet potatoes were also produced in winter. All the cultivation relied on human labor and animals. The rice crops were mainly for home consumption, only the surplus was used to exchange for other items of daily living in the nearby market at Tuen Mun. The villagers also raised pigs and poultry for their own diet. Fish caught in the nearby seashore was also a major food item. The economy was mainly stagnant and remained at a subsistence level. The village was isolated from other parts of the New Territories because of inadequate transportation; Castle Peak Road had not been constructed at that time. No villagers had employment outside the community.

The gentry, fu-lao, were the prominent leaders in So Kun Wat Village at this stage. They were of higher ranking in the geneological order of the lineage. Each lineage had its own ancestral hall, with a budget derived from the lineage property, which was administered by a

board of fu-lao. Issues associated with ancestral halls included worship of ancestors and distribution of pork which was an important but scarce item in the diet of the villagers. Whenever there were disputes among members of the lineage or among members between two different lineages, the gentry and fu-lao were requested to mediate the quarrels, and make their decisions. Their arbitration would be accepted by the disputants and other villagers in most cases.

The New Territories Administration at that time also realized the influential power of this local leaders. In fact, the government forces seldom penetrated into the native village provided that internal peace was maintained and taxes over the land were paid regularly. At the same time, these local leaders were recognized by the District Office as local representative of the village and any issues associated with the village would first be discussed with these local leaders. In this way, the gentry established contact with the District Office, which was excluded from other villagers⁷.

However, a village representative system was formally established after the Japanese period in Hong Kong, and caused some alterations to the existing leadership. During the Japanese rule in Hong Kong, from 1941-1943, village representatives were set up among villages in New Territories to be responsible to the Japanese army for affairs in their villages. The villagers were not willing to assume these positions because of the Japanese's harsh

treatment, and the disrepute associated with them. In So Kun Wat Village, village representatives at the Japanese period were not the gentry, or fu-lao of the village, but rather some other lineage member who were of lower ranking in the geneological order. After the War, when the British Government came back to Hong Kong, the village representative system was institutionalized as an intermediate communication channel between the District Office and villagers in New Territories. The village representatives were elected by the local villagers or nominated by District Officer. In So Kun Wat Village, two village representatives were thus separately elected by the Lee and Chan lineages. The Chin lineage, because of its small population size, was placed under the representatives of the other two lineages. Of the two representatives, the one from the Chan lineage is of lower rank, a 'vice-representative' ⁸. It was in this way that village representative formally emerged in the So Kun Wat Village.

The village representative at that time became the formal communication channel between the District Office and local villagers. Orders from the District Office were transmitted through these village representatives to the village. And, matters involving local villagers were communicated in the same way to the District Office. As the village was isolated because of the inadequacy of transportation at that time, and there was in fact not much interference from the government agencies, such a

communication system was convenient for both the District Office and the local villagers. However, the representatives did utilize their monopoly situation to affirm their internal status. Because whenever the indigenous people wanted to contact the Government they had to seek help from these village representatives, so the success of their matters would be almost necessarily contingent upon the willingness of the village representatives. During this stage, the most common issues for which villagers would need the village representatives' help were applications for a building permit from the District Office, registration of the transaction of land, proof of an individual's identity as a villager with good conduct (which was a prerequisite for employment in the army or the police force), and sponsorship for villagers who wanted to go abroad.

That the village representatives had influential power over the indigenous people was also due to their internal resources as being of higher genealogical ranking, or having a larger amount of land in their control. They were requested to administer ceremonies and ancestral worship together with the gentry and fu-laos. When disputes happened among villagers, they were requested to arbitrate. As a matter of fact, these village representatives⁹ were locally called village headmen or t'sun-chang, a term which is associated with administrative power in the Chinese terminology. In a way, this term can be seen as an indication of the representatives' internal influence.

The Village Representative System was all but an institution created by the Government for the sake of administrative convenience. As a result, this system was not only accepted by the indigenous people without objection, it also led to a new aspect in the local leadership structure. The representatives were shrewd enough to utilize their position to establish their own internal influence in the village. They monopolized the communication channel between the District Office and the native people, and were able to dispense resources derived from their position. At a stage when it was almost impossible for natives to bypass the channel of the village representatives to reach the District Office (due to a number of factors -- illiteracy of the villagers, ignorance of Cantonese, troubles involved in visiting, and the practice of government policy), the village representatives' leadership position became increasingly solidified.

The Second Stage 1950-1957

The influx of refugees to So Kun Wat Village was the dramatic event in this stage. The process of migration continued throughout the period and the subsequent years. The refugees arrived here mainly because of hardships in life or political instability in China. Most of them came from villages adjacent to the towns in Waiyang, Lufung, where they had already been quite skillful in vegetable farming. When they first arrived at the village, they settled in hillsides and near the seashore in the outer parts of the village. Some of them who came with a small amount of capital, converted some hillside areas or land near the sea into cultivated land, and started vegetable farming. Other outsiders, who arrived at a later period, or without enough capital, after working for those who already owned farms there, or in construction industry outside the village for a short period, again followed the same practice and turned deserted hillsides into their own cultivated land. In this period, vegetable farming was the major economic activity of the outsiders, together with raising poultry and pigs. This was because they had already acquired skill in vegetable planting and the nature of their fertile and steep land was not suitable for paddy cultivation. By 1957, there were about seventy outsider households in the village. Except for a very small number, almost all of them were vegetable farmers. Of those non-vegetable farmers, two or three were shop owners, others were mainly

poultry raisers, only one outsider household was cultivating rice. For the pen-t'u-jen, two-crop rice cultivation was still their major economic activity and the major source of income. It was not until the latter years in this period that employment abroad in London or in the police and army became available for these pen-t'u-jen, and provided another source of income. However, such opportunities were still very rare and only a few pen-t'u-jen obtained such jobs. Thus, at this stage, both outsiders and pen-t'u-jen relied on internal agricultural activities for their living.

Although some outsiders were relatives, or came from the same place in China, most of them came from different countries in Kwangtung. As a whole, these outsiders were not organized. No formal association existed among them. The products of their vegetable farms were sold to middlemen, only one of whom was a member of the outsider group himself.

As the outsiders converted hillsides and deserted areas into cultivated land by themselves, they did not rely on the pen-t'u-jen's land. At a time when population was relatively small, this method of obtaining land was still possible in So Kun Wat. On the other hand, although they were living in the same village, there was an internal boundary between the two groups of people. The outsiders lived in the outer parts, separately and scattered whereas the pen-t'u-jen lived together in the inner part. This geographical boundary clearly set the two groups of people

apart.

The conflicts that most often emerged at that time were disputes over the cows. The pen-t'u-jen raised many cows and buffaloes for ploughing their rice fields. These animals were fed with grass. Sometimes, when cows ran into the vegetable fields or ate the vegetables of the outsiders, quarrels would break out between the owner of the animal and the outsider farmer. This kind of dispute happened very often, and in a number of cases even led to fighting. In the outsiders' opinion, they were despised by the pen-t'u-jen when they first settled down in the village; the pen-t'u-jen treated them quite harshly. Whenever there were quarrels involving an outsider and a pen-t'u-jen, the latter would mobilize the whole lineage to fight against the outsider concerned, regardless of which side was in the right. There were several cases where outsiders were seriously beaten up by the pen-t'u-jen.

Outsiders therefore were quick to realize the risk of any direct encounter with the organized pen-t'u-jen. Instead, whenever they had disputes with the pen-t'u-jen because of the cows, or other quarrels, they took the issue to the gentry, the fu-laos, and the village headmen directly, and sought help from these local leaders. In most case, these local leaders were willing to speak for the outsiders and made the arbitration. In return, the outsiders would send gifts to them both immediately and during the Chinese festivals. Internally, the village headmen had the same

influence in arbitration as the gentry and the fu-lao had.

To the outsiders, contacts with District Office were also dependent on the village representatives' channel. The outsiders' newly cultivated plots, which were all on Crown land, needed registration in the District Office in order to obtain a permit of use. The village representatives' help was sought by the outsiders in these issues. Obtaining a letter of introduction signed by the village representatives (in order to give proof of identity and evidence of actual land use) was a necessary procedure that every farming outsider had to follow. Thus, since the village headmen were in a position to help outsiders both in dealing with pen-t'u-jen and contacting the District Office, they were highly respected by the outsiders in return.

The Third Stage 1957-1969

Throughout this stage, the So Kun Wat villagers experienced obvious changes in economic activities which were instigated by both internal changes in agricultural production and external industrialization in Tsuen Wan.

It was at the beginning of this stage that a number of pen-t'u-jen started to produce market-value vegetables too. This shift in internal agricultural activity was accounted for by the relative advantages derived from vegetable farming compared with rice cultivation. Vegetables required a shorter length of time for cultivation, and could have seven or eight crops on each piece of land each year. Moreover, vegetable farming offered a continuous income and a greater profit than rice (Potter 1971). The benefits of vegetable cultivation attracted the pen-t'u-jen in So Kun Wat Village and within a short period many of them learned the skills needed for vegetable planting from the outsiders and shifted to cultivating vegetables.

Another event that facilitated this rapid change was the Agriculture and Fisheries Department's ¹⁰ establishment of the Vegetable Marketing Organization which undertook the wholesaling of all vegetable products, and set up a number of Vegetable Marketing Co-operative Societies in the rural area to help transport the farmers' vegetable products, so as to ensure more profits to farmers. In 1957, a Vegetable Marketing Co-operative Society emerged

in So Kun Wat Village, the function of which was to transport vegetable products from this district and some adjacent villages to the wholesale market in Kowloon. The formal name of this organization was Kun Lam District Vegetable Marketing Co-operative Society¹¹, its membership included both outsiders and pen-t'u-jen from So Kun Wat Village.

The transition from rice crop cultivation to vegetable farming continued throughout the first few years of this stage. By 1965, rice cultivation had finally disappeared from So Kun Wat Village; most of the previous rice fields had been transformed into vegetable farms, and the rest, which were only a small amount, were just abandoned by the pen-t'u-jen¹².

Employment outside the village had already been available for the villagers since the late fifties, but the number who had taken it up was negligible. Those who did leave went mainly to jobs abroad in the Chinese restaurants in London and to minor positions in the Public Works Department¹³ and the Royal Police Force of the Hong Kong Government. By the mid-sixties, there were also ample employment opportunities in the factories in nearby Tsuen Wan, and, together with continued recruitment to the Royal Police Force and the Public Works Department, native villagers began working in various industries outside the village; their monthly salaries thus became further sources of income for the local villagers.

This trend of seeking external employment has continued in the village since then, but its early impact as an alternative source of income did not alter the existing agricultural pattern too much. The outsiders were, by that time fully occupied with their own farming works and so could not take advantage of such opportunities at all, though some who migrated there a bit later than the outsider farmers did take to work outside the village. The pen-t'u-jen who had adopted vegetable farming as early as in the late fifties, still persevered in it because of the internal division of labor in their families - the women of these Hakka lineages were responsible for the daily tilling of the vegetable farms with assistance from the males only in the afternoons when they came back from their jobs. Thus, the major source of income for both outsiders and pen-t'u-jen was still the vegetable products of their farms, and only a small number of recently arrived outsider workers was really dependent upon the monthly salary income for their living.

Together with changes in the economic activities, the population increase because of migration and natural growth had also been continuing in the village since 1949. As a result, the increase in the number of outsiders due to both in-migration and the practice of maintaining
¹⁴
 large families led to the population of outsiders being large than that of the insiders by the end of this stage.

The Kun Lam Vegetable Marketing Co-operative Society

The Kun Lam Vegetable Marketing Co-operative Society was the only association that existed in the village (other than the village representative system) in this stage. Consequently, the middlemen were superseded with the exception of one individual who himself was also a member of the lu-fung group of the outsiders and maintained his position as a middleman for the lu-fung farmers¹⁵. The majority of outsider farmers, and the pen-t'u-jen all gradually became members of the newly established organization. In the first year of its establishment, its membership was eighty-six, twenty of whom were pen-t'u-jen, and sixty-six outsiders¹⁶. The total figure continued to rise as more pen-t'u-jen shifted to cultivating vegetables and more outsiders migrated to the area and became farmers. By the early sixties, the total membership of the Vegetable Marketing Co-operative Society was about 210, of whom two-fifth were pen-t'u-jen while the rest were outsiders.

The function of the Vegetable Marketing Co-operative Society was not limited to the transportation of daily vegetable products, for it provided a number of welfare services for its members too. Voluntarily established by the local villagers, the Vegetable Marketing Co-operative Society was registered in the Agriculture and Fisheries Department¹⁷ and was subject to its supervision. Many services offered by the Agriculture and Fisheries Department

to help improve the farmers' products were transmitted through this Vegetable Marketing Co-operative Society, such as loans for development veterinary services, information about innovations (e.g. mechanical cultivators, water sprinkler systems, new pesticides), and special funds for victims of disasters caused by typhoons or heavy rainfalls. The VMCS deducted five percent of the producers' sale returns for the expenses of marketing. The profits, after deducting the actual expenditure incurred (staff salary and transportation), were used as funds for the Society. In this way the Society accumulated a certain amount of capital, which was used in the welfare schemes for local farmers, including loans (which amounted to twenty thousand dollars each year), the provision of recreation facilities for local villagers, and the distribution of gifts to farmers at the end of each year.

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A board of directors composed of five persons, with two of them as the chairmen, was the decision-making center of the VMCS, responsible for the administration of the Society. The chairmen represented the Vegetable Marketing Society on the Federation of VMCS in the New Territories, and was in contact with the Agriculture and Fisheries Department. Internally the board was entitled to administer the financial affairs involving their member's application for loans provided by the Society, and sponsoring other applications for loans provided by the Agriculture and Fisheries Department. In cases of disaster, it had to

assist the Department in evaluating the damage to local crops and paying out compensation.

The Present Stage 1970 -

Because of the overall economic growth in Hong Kong, the economic structure of the rural areas in which agricultural activities had predominated previously, changed a great deal. As more and more employment opportunities began to open up in nearby industrial areas like Tsuen Wan and Kowloon, the occupational structure of So Kun Wat Village become consequently more and more different from that of the past. Large numbers of villagers, both outsiders and pen-t'u-jen, obtained jobs in various industries outside the community; a few villagers even tried to establish their own businesses in the urban area. Monthly salaried become an important source of income for very many villagers, and the only source of income for some of them.

Population growth is one of the factors that explain this increase in external employment. Because of the post-war baby boom and the practice of large family among the farmers, the natural increase in population had been quite large; and, by this stage, this second generation of residents had grown up and was seeking employment outside the village, in the urban area.

Nevertheless, external employment opportunities have had a differential impact upon the agricultural activities of the pen-t'u-jen and the outsiders. Almost all the males and young females of the pen-t'u-jen lineages are now working for jobs outside the village, and the daily tilling of the vegetable farms is left to the older females.

Some of these older Hakka females have even been attracted to work in the construction sector because of the higher wages, amounting to sixty dollars a day for a female worker. Thus, a decrease in the number of pen-t'u-jen engaged in vegetable farming can be observed at the present time. In contrast, though a large part of the second generation of the outsider farmers have also entered occupations other than vegetable farming, almost all the previous farmers are still engaging in their farming business, usually with at least one of their siblings as a full-time worker in the farm. Factors that account for this contrast can be traced to the different attitudes towards vegetable farming held by these two groups of people. There is a deep-seated disrespect toward vegetable farming¹⁹ in the pen-t'u-jen's belief. At the same time, they also have a less progressive attitude²⁰ toward vegetable farming and this led to less investment in their farms, which, together with unsophisticated skills in planting, means that the profit derived from their vegetable farming is less than that of the outsiders. By contrast, the outsider farmers do not have this disdainful feeling toward vegetable farming, and, being more progressive, they invest a great deal of capital in their farms (such as buying the automatic sprinkler systems and the small mechanic cultivators); consequently, the quality and quantity of their products are better than those of the pen-t'u-jen and they bring them greater profits. As a result, the pen-t'u-jen who remain in vegetable farming

in So Kun Wat Village are only thirty-five household and a large amount of their land has been either deserted or leased to outsider farmers. At the present time the total amount of unused land in So Kun Wat Village is estimated to be about 35 acres.

The establishment of the So Kun Wat Farming Association

In 1970, the So Kun Wat Farming Association, voluntarily organized by the outsider farmers, emerged as another farmers' organization in the village. The explanation of the establishment of this new association given by an official in the Agriculture and Fisheries Department was that it arose from personal grievances among the leaders of the existing VMCS. One of them left the co-operative society and initiated a new one. On the other hand, the reason offered by the members of this Farming Association themselves was that they needed a society to be exclusively for the outsider farmers, so that the profit derived from marketing their products could be used to serve their own welfare.

Unlike the VMCS, the Farming Association was registered by the Registrar of Societies, and is subject to the District Officer's (not the Agriculture and Fisheries Department's) supervision. The Agriculture and Fisheries Department is only advisory in function. The Association is run by a committee consisting of twenty members, two of them as chairman and vice chairman respectively, the others

responsible for different duties. The formal goal stated in the regulations of the Association is to organize its members so as to achieve their common goals. A permanent club owned by the Association was built on the outskirts of the village in 1973, three years after the establishment of the Association. The services offered by the Association at the present time include the transportation of the farmer's products to the vegetable market, and the operation of a clinic and a kindergarten with seventy students. Although there is no explicit rule in the Farming Association to deter the pen-t'u-jen's participation, it is a fact that the members of this Association are exclusively outsiders. By ethnic origin most of them are from Waiyang, Lufung, and Haifung. Some of the members are in fact former members of the VMCS, who have shifted their membership to join this new association. The other members are those outsiders who have not participated in the Co-operative Society but have their products collected by the middleman in the past. This middleman (from the lufung group of outsiders mentioned above) also joined this Association, and become an active leader even though his own interest is damaged by the emergence of this new association. The membership of the Farming Association amounts to one hundred and seventy households at the present time, including some outsider farmers from adjacent villages.

The Resumption of Land

The resumption of land from local villagers by the District Office to implement the development plans of the Hong Kong Government was the most drastic event that happened in this stage. The Hong Kong Government, after years of deliberation, enacted policies to develop New Towns in the New Territories to meet the demands for residential space of the Hong Kong society. Tuen Mun, which is near the So Kun Wat Village, is selected for New Town development, and so the Tuen Mun District Office is responsible for the resumption of land for the Government's construction projects. In the early seventies, a large amount of land in the outer part of the village was resumed by the District Office in order to facilitate the building of the Tuen Mun Road, which connects Tuen Mun and Tsuen Wan. During that process, a number of the outsiders lost their occupied Crown land and houses built under temporary permits²¹. In return they only received a small amount of compensation for their vegetable products, and a kind of removal fee for their houses. At the same time, a few pen-t'u-jen were also affected by the resumption, but because their land was private land, they were given larger sums in compensation. Thus the direct resumption had different repercussions upon outsiders and pen-t'u-jen.

Moreover, because of the village's closeness to the developing Tuen Mun New Town, a part of the area in the village is drawn into the lay-out plan for development, and

therefore large increases in the land values can be observed by now. Large amounts of the land which have already been deserted by the pen-t'u-jen have recently been sold to speculators from outside. Pen-t'u-jen are quite satisfied with this kind of transaction. No objections against the selling of land to non-lineage members have been observed so far, and indeed the distribution of money derived from such transactions among lineage members is known to have occurred quite often in the pen-t'u-jen's group.

Notes

1. This population figure is provided by the Liaison Office of the Tuen Mun District Office based on an estimation.
2. hai-sha-jen (海下人).
3. wai-ti-jen (外地人) designates people who came from elsewhere in China.
4. wei-tau-jen (圍頭人) designates people who live in the inner part of the village.
5. Waiyang (惠陽), Lufung (陸豐), Haifung (海豐) are hsiens (縣) in Waichow Prefecture (惠州府), whereas Teo-chiu (潮州) and Tungkwan (東莞) are not.
6. The ancestors of these lineages moved to the area during the Chia-ch'ing (嘉慶) period, Ching dynasty.
7. In fact, a member of the gentry was known for his familiarity with the officials in the New Territories Administration then. He embodied in himself the communication channel between the villagers and the officials. Besides, this local leader had a large amount of land in the village.
8. Vice-village-representative (副村代表). Because the population of the Chan lineage was smaller, its representative was regarded as subordinate. However, this internal ranking was cancelled when the elections were resumed.

9. t'sun-chang (村 長).
10. In 1960, the Fisheries Division and the Co-operative Development Department together with the Fisheries Research Unit from the University were incorporated into one Department. Then, on 1st July, 1964 the former Agriculture and Fisheries Department and the Co-operative Development and Fisheries Department were amalgamated to form the Agriculture and Fisheries Department. For convenience, the phrase Agriculture and Fisheries Department is used here to refer to all these units though they were actually not incorporated before 1964. For details, see the introduction to the 1964-1965 Annual Report of the Agriculture and Fisheries Department.
11. Kun-Lam District Vegetable Marketing Co-operative Society (堂欖區蔬菜運銷合作社) was responsible for the transportation of vegetable products from farmers in the area between So Kun Wat Village and Tai Lam Chun Village.
12. Vegetable farming, unlike rice-cultivation, requires intensive labour for each small piece of land throughout the year; besides, the already available opportunities for employment, although few as yet, caused a decrease in the amount of agricultural work in a number pen-t'u jen households. As a result, a small amount of land was deserted in this stage.

13. The jobs in the Public Work Department taken by these pen-t'u-jen were mainly in the maintenance of the Castle Peak Road and the Tai Lam Chun Reservoir.
14. The large family size in the outsider farmer households was a result of the farmers' value that an increased child was also an additional labour unit in the household farming. Besides, the young age of these migrants at this stage also accounted for the large number of children.
15. This middleman maintained his position through the appeal to common ethnic origin with his clients; however, the commission which he deducted from the return of farmers was reduced to a lower rate comparable to that charged by the VMCS.
16. This figure was provided by the secretary of the VMCS in the village.
17. The VMCS at that time was registered in the Co-operative Development Department, which was later incorporated into the Agriculture and Fisheries Department. This Co-operative Society was the only kind of voluntary association that was not subject to the District Office's supervision in New Territories.
18. Board of directors. (理事會)
19. In the pen-t'u-jen's value system vegetable farming is dirty because nightsoil was once the major fertilizer for it; they also consider that a vegetable farmer is of lower status than a worker.

20. This explanation of the pen-t'u-jen's less progressive attitude in regard to vegetable farming was given by an official ;in the Agriculture and Fisheries Department. However, pen-t'u-jen in other isolated villages in the New Territories do not necessarily have such an attitude.
21. As the land was Crown land (and therefore belonged to the Government of Hong Kong)and the houses were built under temporary structure permits, the outsiders were not entitled to compensation for their surrendered land or for their temporary structures which were also built on Crown land. What they could receive was compensation for the loss of vegetable products and a kind of removal fee for the house demolished.

CHAPTER III

Social Issues in So Kun Wat Village

In order to illustrate the underlying relationship between the pen-t'u-jen and the outsiders and thus offer a better understanding of the power structure in So Kun Wat Village, some cases are presented here for illustration.

The Election of the Directors of the VMCS

During the third stage described above, the annual election of directors of the Vegetable Marketing Co-operative Society was a great event in the social life of So Kun Wat Village. The voting was conducted at the headquarters of the Society, at a selected night in December each year. Throughout this stage, the average attendance rate on such occasions reached up to eighty-five percent of its total membership. Villagers who were not registered as members of the co-operative society also liked to be on the spot. Each member had a right to vote for one candidate, and the five candidates who captured the highest numbers of votes become directors and constituted the board for the following year. The chairman and vice chairman would be elected by the directors among themselves. Each year, the number of pen-t'u-jen who sat on the board was one or two. This outcome was a result of the different

proportion between outsider and pen-t'u-jen in the electorate and in the membership of the VMCS, since each tended to vote for candidates of their own group. The two pen-t'u-jen directors were in fact the village representatives. Most of the other three or four positions were held among a number of six or seven outsider farmers who occupied relatively more land than others and were known as rich farmers in the village.

At the present time, by contrast, the elections for the directors of the VMCS attract a very low participation rate among its members. The average number of members present on the voting night has decreased to about fifty, one fifth of the registered membership. Of this electorate, fourth-fifth are pen-t'u-jen, one-fifth are outsiders. Consequently, there has been a reverse in the constituency of the board thus elected; most of the four directors are pen-t'u-jen, only one is an outsider. Moreover, the four pen-t'u-jen elected to the board are not the village representatives; instead, they are people of low status in the pen-t'u-jen's group. The outsider director also does not receive high respect from the villagers at the present time. An explanation given by a village representative who was asked why he did not join in the election was that the VMCS no longer exerted any influence in the village.

The Application for Temporary Structure Permit

The outsiders who settled down in So Kun Wat Village in the early fifties did not have private land to build houses for occupation at that time, instead they built many huts among the hillside areas which were Crown land. Although this kind of structure was strictly speaking illegal, the District Office did not take any action against them. It was not until 1959 that a squatter patrol was instituted in the District Office to control such illegal structures¹. However, as So Kun Wat Village was an area which still allowed the erection of temporary structure on the Crown land by that time², all the huts occupied by the outsiders were permitted to remain if they obtained a temporary structure permit in the District Office. The same requirement also applied to buildings used for agricultural purposes, like pigsties and poultry runs³.

Thus, since 1959, outsiders had to apply for a temporary structure permit from the District Office in order to clarify the legal status of their existing structures, and if they wanted to build new houses or agricultural structures on Crown land they had to obtain a permit from the District Office first. Such applications usually relied on the village representative's help in confirming the applicant's status, filling in forms and submitting them to the District Office. Although no explicit rule prohibited individuals from applying by themselves, it was quite difficult for villagers to bypass

the village head's communication channel as most villagers did not know how to apply, and to go through all the necessary procedures required a great deal of time and trouble. Moreover, there was a rule that the erection of any temporary structure should not meet with other villager's objections. Reasons for objecting to an erection included controversies about the ownership of the land concerned or about the pen-t'u-jen's ⁴ feng-shui. Whether a temporary structure was objected to by native villagers or not was proved by the village representative's signature. Therefore, because of this procedure, the outsiders were very much dependent on the village representative's help in applying for a temporary structure permit.

The following case shows the kind of relationship that existed between an outsider and the village representatives in regard to a temporary structure permit.

In 1963, Mr. X, an outsider farmer, had a pigsty turned into a small brick factory without previously obtaining permission from the District Office. As the pigsty was a form of agricultural structure, the change in usage was illegal. This situation became known to the District Office and a notice to demolish the small brick factory was sent to Mr. X. Hoping to preserve the business, Mr. X turned to help from the village representatives. The two village heads immediately brought him to see the District Officer. After the three of them had held a serious consultation with the District Officer, the small brick factory was

allowed to remain for a period of time. In fact, Mr. X was also a director of the VMCS at that time.

Loans from the VMCS

Loans provided to members in the VMCS were important to the daily life of the vegetable farmers during the third stage. Although vegetable farming was relatively more profitable than rice cultivation, the income derived from it was only just enough for the farmer's living and fluctuated with the daily vegetable production and the market price. Farmers might run out of money if their harvest was poor due to bad weather, such as typhoons and heavy rainfalls. When farmers were faced with difficulties in their financial affairs, they could borrow an amount of money from the co-operative society. This kind of transaction was subject to the approval of the chairman of the board of directors. Throughout the third stage, many members relied on the loans provided by the VMCS to deal with their financial problems, and arranging loans for members was thus almost the daily activity of the VMCS. The credit would be deducted from the members' income from vegetable products.

Loan transactions in the VMCS at the present stage have become less frequent than before. The decrease in the money borrowed from the VMCS is a result of the

shift in the major source of income of some members, and the general increase in the return to vegetable farming because of the now stable and high market price of vegetables. Vegetable farmers are able to accumulate small budgets to ward against disasters, and hence have no more need to rely on the VMCS's help to cope with their financial problems.

The Election of the Village Representatives

Village representatives in So Kun Wat Village are chosen by election. Each male pen-t'u-jen, who is married, has the right to vote or to be elected. No outsider has ever been allowed to participate in the election.

In fact, two village representatives had remained in their position over a period of about twenty-five years because of the suspension of election in the past. It was not until the early seventies that the election emerged again at the request of other pen-t'u-jen villagers. At the present time, the election is conducted once every two years. The explanation given by those who urged the restoration of election was that because one of the former village representatives was too much concerned with the application for temporary structure permits for the outsiders. So this was only for his own benefit, they did not want to be represented by him anymore. In addition, some other pen-t'u-jen hoped to become village representatives --- another factor accounting for the resumption of election in the village.

At the present stage, it is observed that a number of pen-t'u-jen want to become the representative of the village. Competition among these candidates has been very keen, and as a result a number of cleavages among them have been generated. Many villagers believe that this is because being a village representative can bring about certain advantages. In fact, an ex-village representative is now speculating in land, a business which relies very much on having access to the latest information about pending sales and knowledge of land. At the same time, a large amount of the land which belongs to the lineage's property is being sold to speculators from other places. The village representative's position can be quite critical in such transactions, for not only are they very likely to have prior knowledge from the District Officer but also in most cases, the village representatives have to sign the transaction documents on behalf of the lineage.

The Inauguration of the Farming Association

Every two years a new deputy committee of twenty people is elected in the Farming Association. Each time, the inauguration of the new deputy committee and the chairmen is conducted seriously in a restaurant with a feast offered to its members. Usually, the officials of the District Office and the Agriculture and Fisheries Department are requested to supervise the oaths of the committee and the chairmen. The chairmen of Waichow T'ung

Hsiang Hui⁵ in Yuen Long and Tsuen Wan, as well as the chairman of Outsider Association⁶ in Tuen Mun, are invited to be honorary speakers in the ceremony, and the village representatives of So Kun Wat Village are also honorary guests there. Participation of members in the inauguration is very high. There is a great contrast in the degree of participation of members between the Farming Association and the VMCS.

The Activities of the Farming Association

A number of services are offered by the So Kun Wat Farming Association to its members. The transportation of the vegetable products of the members is the daily activity of the association. The actual number of farmers selling their vegetable products through the Farming Association is about fifty at present, which is one-third of its total membership. This situation is because some members raise pigs or poultry only, and do not have vegetable products. Besides, the middleman who used to transport the vegetable products of the lu-fung group to the wholesale market in the past and deducted five percent of the farmer's return for his labour, is also an active leader of the Farming Association, and has certain influence upon this lu-fung group. In order to secure more cohesion among members, a part of these men still sell their products through the middleman. Running a kindergarten and a clinic for the members are also the daily activities of the Farming

Association. Tours to foreign cities are organized every year, with the participation of members and other villagers. Whenever death happens in a member's family, the Farming Association offers relief for the member and help with the funeral service. Moreover, gifts like oil and pork are distributed to members at the end of every year.

The Agriculture and Fisheries Department is in an advisory position to the Farming Association, and information related to farming is transmitted through the Association to its members. When relief is distributed to farmers after natural disasters, the Farming Association also assists the Agriculture and Fisheries Department in evaluating the loss of vegetable products of its members. However, loans in the Agriculture and Fisheries Department are not offered to farmers through this Association, instead the members can apply directly to the Department.

One of the formal goals of the Farming Association, as stated by a deputy committee member of the association, is to offer a legitimate organization to unite the outsiders in So Kun Wat Village, so that they may have their own association to represent them.

The Resumption of Land by the District Office

The resumption of land for the building of the Tuen Mun Road was the first large scale resumption of land in So Kun Wat Village. The District Office first sent

letters to all the villagers directly concerned to have them notified, and then evaluated the appropriate compensation for each farmer's vegetable production with the help of officials from the Agriculture and Fisheries Department. Throughout the process, the District Officials contacted the farmers directly. The village representatives were notified previously about the resumption, but the actual communications with the outsider farmers concerned were undertaken by officials in the District Office.

However, any complaints or appeals arising from the part of the villagers were communicated through different channels to the District Office. If the concerned villagers were pen-t'u-jen, certainly they would transmit their messages through the village representatives to the District Office, but if they were members of the Farming Association, the association would help them to convey their problems to the District Office. The following two cases illustrate how the Farming Association offered help to its members in contacting the District Office.

Mr. Y, an outsider farmer, because of the resumption of land, moved to live in a place which was very far away from his vegetable farm. He hoped to erect a temporary structure on his farm for the convenience of his farming work. The Farming Association wrote a letter to the District Office applying for permission on his behalf. The farmer's application was allowed to erect a small hut for agricultural purposes in the vegetable field.

Two outsider farmers, Mr. W and Mrs. Z, who were members of the Farming Association, had part of their land resumed by the District Office; but, not being quite clear about the compensation that they could receive, they went to seek help from the chairman of the Farming Association. The chairman accompanied them to see the officials in the District Office, and their cases were dealt with immediately. Afterwards, the two felt very grateful for the chairman's help.

A pen-t'u-jen whose land was resumed by the District Office for the construction of the second phase of the Tuen Mun Road, was not satisfied with the compensation that he was offered by the District Office; instead, he demanded an increased amount for each square foot of his surrendered land. The District Office refused to alter the original terms in the compensation because the land was being resumed for the purpose of public construction⁷. This villager resorted to a village representative's help. After prolonged negotiation with the District Officials, although the original terms of the compensation were maintained, the villager was offered an additional relief which was up to about four dollars per square foot of surrendered land in consideration of the seriousness of his loss in the resumption. The total amount of income that this pen-t'u-jen actually actually received was approximate to what he had requested, and was accepted by him.

Discontent with the Village Representatives

When the Tuen Mun Road was being constructed in the village in the mid-seventies, heavy rain caused a landslide in the road and some of the vegetables belonging to outsider farmers in the nearby fields were thus ruined. These outsiders complained that it was the construction company's fault and asked the village representative to consult with the District Officials about the matter on their behalf. The village representative thought that the outsider farmers should apply for compensation from the Agriculture and Fisheries Department instead of directing their grievance against the construction company, and was not willing to take up the case for them. So these outsiders went to discuss with the construction company directly, and this later became known to the District Office. Consequently, the farmers each received a small sum of compensation from the company. Many of the outsiders complained that the reason the village representative was unwilling to help them was because they were outsiders, and that no benefit would accrue to him from such efforts.

A number of street lamps were offered by the District Office to the village in 1978; however, all these lamps were installed along the inner part of the road, which was in the pen-t'u-jen's residential area. As these lamps were applied for by the village representatives, outsiders who resided in the outer part of the village were displeased with their location and thought that the village representatives were

only concerned with the interest of their own people.

In fact, among the outsiders the opinion that the pen-t'u-jen village representatives would not offer them serious help because they were outsiders and were unable to exert influence in the election is still not uncommon; some other outsiders even complain that the village representatives' assistance is contingent upon benefits that one could offer him.

The Dispute Over the Construction of the Village Road

In 1978 when a housing project was under construction on the boundary hill of So Kun Wat Village, the earth removed from the hill was taken by a team of lorries to fill in the seashore near Tuen Mun. Because of the daily operations of this team of lorries, the outer part of the village road was seriously damaged. Dust was everywhere when the weather was dry, and turned into mud when it rained. The whole situation caused much inconvenience to the villagers. At first, a group of pen-t'u-jen stopped the running of the lorries, and threatened not to allow the construction work to proceed until a new road had been built.

The village representatives were summoned to the District Office to discuss the matter. After the consultation, the village head came to the village and explained the consultation's difficulties to the pen-t'u-jen, and asked them not to cause any more trouble to the lorry drivers. After this incident, no more disturbance was observed.

There was a belief among the villagers that the construction company had offered some benefits to the group of pen-t'u-jen. But the road was still in bad condition; no new road was built and it soon became clear that other villagers, both pen-t'u-jen and outsiders, were not satisfied with the way that the problem of the road had been dealt with. Complaints over the bad condition of the road were still heard in the village. In April, 1979, the Farming Association summoned a meeting of its committee to discuss the matter and made the decision to settle the road problem by themselves. A letter was submitted to the District Office by the Farming Association, stating that they would resort to their own methods to deal with the construction company if the company did not start to build a new road within a week.

Exactly one week later, the construction company started to build a new road near the old one. This outcome was what the Farming Association had previously demanded, and the members of the Association believed that the construction of the new road was a direct result of their letter to the District Office.

Notes

1. See the 1960-1961 Annual Departmental Report of New Territories Administration, para. 313, 315.
2. Areas in the New Territories are divided into various types for the purpose of squatter control. So Kun Wat Village at this stage was still a type of resettlement area where the building of cottages or the erection of huts made of such materials of wood and tin could be permitted in accordance with a proper layout. For details please see also the 1960-1961 Annual Departmental Report of the New Territories Administration, para. 316.
3. Ibid, para. 317.
4. feng-shui (風 水) in Cantonese is fung-shui
"Feng-shui is the science of siting graves and houses such that maximum good luck will flow to the householder or the descendants of the grave-occupants. Good luck includes a multitude of things: wealth, sons, official positions, safety, reliable harvest, protection. Those effects accrue to him who has harnessed fortune."
(E.N. Anderson, M L. Anderson 1973, p.129)
"In practice at the village level, feng-shui involves relating the structure of the village to the hills, streams and plains around them...much care is given to every detail of the location of a house or a structure." (Ibid, p 130)

5. Wai Chow T'ung Hsiang Hui (惠州同鄉會); a T'ung Hsiang Hui is a kind of voluntary association organized by people of same place of origin in China. Wai Chow is a prefecture to which Waiyang, Lufung and Haifung belong.
6. Outsider Association in Tuen Mun (屯門僑居居民協會), an association organized by people who live in Tuen Mun but are not the descendants of the pen-t'u-jen.
7. Private land surrendered for public constructions such as roads can only receive a much lower compensation from the Government.

CHAPTER IV

Discussion

Though there have only been three decades since the outsiders began to live in So Kun Wat Village, changes in the elements of the native social structure because of external influence have occurred. Continued migration and natural growth have caused the present population of the village to be five times that of the late forties, and the population of outsiders have become greater than that of the pen-t'u-jen. Economic activity in the village also has undergone a series of alterations. First, after the arrival of outsider farmers, vegetable-farming for the market took the place of rice cultivation, until by the third stage it became the exclusive source of income for the majority of the villagers. Then the availability of employment opportunities for the local villages from factories in nearby Tsuen Wan and Kowloon, the Police Force, the civil service, and even abroad in the Chinese restaurants in Europe, brought alternative sources of income for the native villagers. As a result, the majority of the pen-t'u-jen in So Kun Wat Village have now abandoned agriculture, which was once their means of subsistence, and rely on monthly salaries as their major source of income;

whereas the outsider farmers, the majority of the outsider population, still depend on vegetable farming as their major source of income, even though many of their children have grown up and are employed in the urban industrial society. At the same time, in the Hong Kong Government's development plan the District Office has been assigned the responsibility to resume land from the native villagers. This task, a kind of penetration of external forces, has a serious effect upon the relationship between the District Office and the village at the present stage. Nevertheless, changes in the elements of the internal social structure of So Kun Wat Village have also exerted various influences upon the native power structure.

I. In the second stage, when the outsiders first moved to live in the village, there was no voluntary association. The only village wide organization was the village representative system and the outsiders, who were relatively unorganised and fewer in number than the pen-t'u-jen, had to rely on the village representatives and other local leaders. Whenever they had disputes with the pen-t'u-jen, such as those about the cows, they had to seek help from the local leaders. These Village Representatives, the fu laos and the gentry, thus established their influence over the outsiders because they were able to 'protect' them against the arbitrariness of the pen-t'u-jen by means of their existing leadership upon the latter. In return, outsiders sent gifts to these local leaders during Chinese festivals, which was

an indication of the outsiders' respect for as well as their reliance upon them. During a period when the Government's administrative forces were inadequate in the New Territories, the pen-t'u-jen leaders (whose leadership was based on local resources like land, wealth, and higher ranking in geneo-logical order, or support from the District Office), obtained wide influence upon the native social life. As for the outsiders, their lack of organization due to their relatively short length of interaction, together with the inadequacy of Government administrative forces, caused many of them to become subject to the leadership of the then pen-t'u-jen leaders. Therefore, throughout the second stage, the village heads, the gentry and fu-laos were the prominent figures in the power structure of the native village, whereas outsiders were only in an inferior position

II The emergence of the Kun Tam Vegetable Marketing Co-operative Society which was initiated by the outsiders and a small number of pen-t'u-jen in the village at the beginning of the third stage, caused some alterations to the then pen-t'u-jen monopolized leadership pattern. By this stage, attracted by the advantages of vegetable farming, the pen-t'u-jen had shifted to planting vegetables, and vegetable farming had become the exclusive source of income for the majority of the villagers, even though outside employment opportunities already existed. The VMCS exerted a great deal of influence on the villagers'

finances. First of all, it took the place of the middle-man's position and thus secured more returns to the vegetable farmers. Besides, it was a communication channel between the farmers and the Agriculture and Fisheries Department. Many services provided by the department were transmitted to the native farmers through the co-operative society -- for example: loans, technical assistance, and veterinary services. Moreover, the Co-operative Society had a fund to provide loans for its members who, at that stage, were often in need of assistance when the returns from vegetable farming were small and instable.

Because the VMCS could exert so much influence upon the financial affairs of its members, its directors became another kind of leaders in the village. Applications for loans were subject to the directors' decision and requests for technical assistance were communicated to the Agriculture and Fisheries Department through them. As most pen-t'u-jen gradually shifted to cultivating vegetables and became members of the co-operative society, the directors of the VMCS extended their scope of influence in the village. The competition over the director positions among candidates of the two groups of people could be regarded as an indication of the influence of this newly emerged leadership.

Nevertheless, the village representative system was still the formal communication channel between the District Office and the local villagers. Notices

from the District Office were transmitted to native villagers through the village representatives, and local matters that concerned it were also conveyed to the District Office through the same channel. In this stage, the erection of any structure was subject to the District Office's control. Since 1959, the owners of existing huts or of proposed new huts had been obliged to apply for temporary structure permits from the District Office; besides, the small village houses to which the pen-t'u-jen were entitled and all structures for agricultural purposes also required permits from the District Office. As the village heads were the formal communication channel between the native villagers and the District Office, many of these permits were obtained through the village representatives' help in going through the required procedures and in providing proof that there was no local objection to the structure concerned. Most of the outsiders who at that time resided in huts built on Crown land, and were in need of pigsties and poultry runs, relied on these village representatives to apply for appropriate structure permits for them. This kind of dependance also applied to the pen-t'u-jen when they wanted to apply for small village house permits. In addition, the village representatives' proof of one's status and character was necessary for some other matters, such as the application for a passport to go abroad or for jobs in the Police Force and the British

Army. Therefore, because the village representatives monopolized the formal communication channel with the District Office, and were thus able to offer the villagers help when it was either desirable or necessary, their leadership was maintained during this stage.

The emergence of the VMCS did create a new kind of leadership in addition to the village representatives. Somehow, these two kinds of leadership had different bases, the directors of the VMCS exerted their influence because of their connection with the Agriculture and Fisheries Department and their weight in the decision-making process in the co-operative society, which provided services desired by vegetable farmers; on the other hand, the village representatives based their leadership upon their contacts with the District Office, which was regarded as the Hong Kong Government in the area and controlled many of the native affairs. Yet, the leadership of the directors of the VMCS was limited to its membership, which did not include all the people in the village. A number of outsider farmers who sold their products through the lu-fung middleman and some other outsider workers were not subject to their influence. The village heads, who were the formal representatives of the whole village and monopolized the resources desired by all villagers, were the community-wide leaders. In the early sixties, water shortage often led to disputes among the outsider vegetable farmers. Usually, if the disputants were members of the VMCS, the

directors were requested to arbitrate, but, if one party to the dispute was not a member of the VMCS, or if one of the disputants actually was the then director of the VMCS, the village representatives would be asked to arbitrate. If the village representatives were also directors of the Co-operative Society at the time, they were identified as village heads by the disputants when requested to make arbitration. Besides, the directors of the VMCS also needed the village representatives' assistance when they wanted to contact the District Office, for example, in applying for a temporary structure permit, or consulting with the District Officer, as in Mr. X's case. Moreover, in any disputes between pen-t'u-jen and outsiders in this stage, it was usually the village representatives who were summoned to mediate between them.

To sum up, the leadership pattern in the third stage, with the emergence of the directors of the VMCS, was somewhat more complicated than in the previous stages. Although not everyone was a member, the leadership in the financial affair of the villagers was held by the directors in the VMCS. The village representatives, on the other hand, preserved their leadership in the administrative structure of the village because of their relation with the District Office. Thus, a kind of differentiation in the power structure of the village emerged in the third stage, and outsiders, being able to participate on the board of directors of the VMCS, started to share leadership with

the pen-t'u-jen in the community.

Nevertheless, the influence of the directors of the VMCS began to decrease in the latter part of this stage. In the second half of the sixties, more villagers, including the lately grown up second generation, sought employment in various industries outside the village and so began to provide another source of income for most families in the village; and at the same time, the return from vegetable farming increased because of the relatively better market-price and higher productivity resulting from the application of new farming techniques. Consequently, the loans provided by the VMCS were no longer as important to the daily life of the vegetable farmers as they had been before, and was seldom utilized by its members. The decrease in the attendance rate of the members of the VMCS on election day was an indication of the decline of the influence of the directors in the village life.

III. In the present stage, the continued change in the economic activity of the villagers and the development of Tuen Mun New Town are producing a brand new dimension of leadership in the village.

As a result of the availability of employment opportunities outside the village, there is a difference between the sources of income of the pen-t'u-jen and the outsiders. Most pen-t'u-jen rely on a monthly salary as their major source of income, and have abandoned vegetable

farming. A small number of them who are still engaged in vegetable farming regard it as only a minor source of income. In contrast, the outsiders remain dependent upon vegetable farming as their major source of income. A great deal of the pen-t'u-jen's land is simply deserted; a small amount is leased to the outsider farmers.

The difference in the major source of income leads to a greater disparity between the two groups in the impact that they receive from the development in Tuen Mun. In the resumption of land in the early seventies, a number of outsiders lost their land and houses and only received a kind of compensation for the vegetable products and a small sum of removal fee, but the pen-t'u-jen obtained a larger compensation for their surrendered private land. Moreover, because of the intensive development in nearby Tuen Mun and because the outer part of the village was being drawn into the layout for development, the market price of private land in the village has greatly increased. Thus the land of the pen-t'u-jen, which has already been deserted for a long time, is being sold to land investors and has become an important source of income. The more development in the area, the more profits the pen-t'u-jen can gain from such transactions. For the outsiders, on the contrary, the development regarded as a threat that sooner or later more land and houses will be resumed or demolished respectively and the vegetable farming which is their major source of income will have to be given up. In fact, the

construction works on the boundary hillsides at the present time are believed by the villagers to be an indication that further development will appear in the village.

Though there are differences of interest between the outsiders and the pen-t'u-jen because of the development plans in this stage, the formal communication channel between the village and the District Office is still held by the village representatives, to which position only the pen-t'u-jen are entitled. Elections of the village representatives have been resumed in this stage at the request of a number of the pen-t'u-jen. Competition for the position of village representatives is quite acute, and a number of the pen-t'u-jen want to become representatives of the village.

The village representatives, being the formal communication channel between the District Office and the villagers, are consulted by the District Officials about matters concerning the village, such as the resumption of land and the layout plans in the area. Besides, they represent the village on the Tuen Mun Rural Committee, where many development projects in Tuen Mun are discussed with the District Officials. Because of their position, the village representatives are able to know certain information about the latest developments and the alteration in land value. This information actually is a kind of resource much desired by the pen-t'u-jen as the selling

of land becomes an important source of income for many of them. Also, the application for small village house permits, to which only the pen-t'u-jen are entitled, also need the village representatives' help. Thus, the village representatives, being able to dispense such resources among the pen-t'u-jen, have secured their leadership upon this group of people.

Over the outsiders in the village, the leadership of the village representatives has declined to a great extent. A number of factors contribute to this decline. The decrease in quarrels between outsiders and pen-t'u-jen, together with the efficiency of the Police Force in the New Territories in this stage, has greatly undermined the village representatives' internal mediation power. And, the outer part of the village being drawn into the layout for development, temporary structure permits are no longer being issued to the outsiders in the area. Thus, the resources which the village representatives once manipulated to dispense among the outsiders have simply disappeared. Moreover, the resumption of land in the early seventies has made the underlying conflicts between the outsiders and the pen-t'u-jen over the development plan obvious. The village representatives, who are themselves pen-t'u-jen and not engaged in vegetable farming, are in favor of the development like most pen-t'u-jen because of their potential interest. Outsiders, being excluded from the election of the village representatives and unable to

hinder them, begin to suspect the sincerity of these village heads when they need their help to contact the District Office about matters involved with the resumption of land. Besides, as the outsiders do not have private land to sell, the information about land value which the village representatives withhold are simply not desired by them. Consequently, because of the disappearance of resources desired by outsiders and the outsiders' discredit of their sincerity¹, the leadership of the village representatives is no more recognized by the outsiders in the village.

The emergence of the Farming Association in this stage, can be seen as an attempt by its leader to supersede the leadership of the village representatives over its members, who are the majority of the outsider group. Voluntarily initiated by the outsider farmers in the village, the Farming Association has recruited large numbers from their ranks. Though the condition for entering the Farming Association is to be a farmer in the area, a few outsiders who are not farmers have also joined the association. But none of the pen-t'u-jen is a member.

Internally, many of the activities organized by the Farming Association are not concerned with farming affairs, but rather are welfare services which aim at achieving more cohesion among its members. The large deputy committee comprised of twenty members and the monthly meetings are methods to secure more interaction among its

members. The leaders of the Association very often emphasise the similarities among its membership, as all are outsiders in the village. The invitation of the chairman of Waichow T'ung Hsiang Hui and the Chairman of the Tuen Mun Outsider Association to speak at the inauguration can be seen as a symbol that the ethnicity of its members is the same as both the Waichow people and other outsiders. As a result, we can say that the efforts in offering internal services have secured a certain degree of cohesion among its members. Yet these resources, though desired by the members, are not adequate to allow the chairman of the Farming Association to supersede the leadership of the village representatives over them completely.

Obviously, the resumption of land by the District Office is the issue that mostly affects the outsiders at this stage. The Farming Association, though not the officially recognized communication channel, did contact the District Office on behalf of its members when their land was resumed. The chairman of the Farming Association is known by the members to be quite familiar with officials in the District Office. At the present time, members of the Association rely on the chairman to consult with the officials in the District Office if they have complaints over matters related to land resumption or compensation. In this way, the Farming Association has become an efficient channel to transmit the outsider farmer's discontent to

the District Office. The Association's action in submitting the letter of complaint to the District Office in the dispute with the construction company is an indication that the Farming Association has taken up some of the responsibilities previously held by the village representatives.

The District Office, being assigned the task to resume land from the local people in order to facilitate the construction works of the development plans, is very much concerned with the smooth execution of its task. In the resumption process, officials in the District Office directly contact the villagers concerned to avoid misunderstanding that might derive from inefficient communication channels, and to secure a knowledge of the local reactions to their policy. In the official's view, discontent on the part of the villagers, if not dealt with carefully, might be translated into collective actions. Such a consequence certainly would interfere with the smooth developmental construction works, and cause unnecessary embarrassment to the District Office. Since social harmony has been the principle in the administrative policy of the District Office, local collective action against official development projects would be seen as an indication of the ineffectiveness of its performance. Information about complaints on the part of the villagers is indeed very much wanted by the officials in the District Office. Village representatives, the officially recognized communication channel, have been

relied on to secure advance information of local discontents in the past. However, the underlying difference in interest between the two groups of people in connection with the Government's development plans has deterred the outsiders from approaching the village representatives for help. Instead, thinking that an organization can have more bargaining power than an individual, many outsider farmers are turning to the chairman of the Farming Association to consult with the District Office on their behalf. On the side of the District Office, though the role of the Farming Association in contacting the District Office bypasses the officially recognized communication channel --- the village representatives, it does provide an efficient channel for advanced information of any local discontents among the outsiders before they can be translated into collective actions. Besides, since the Farming Association already has a large membership in the area and a certain degree of cohesion among its members, the leader of the Association can be relied upon to forestall collective actions against the Government's development plans from arising among the outsider farmers in the area. The acceptance of the direct approach of the chairman of the Association on behalf of the outsider farmers in fact is a recognition of the legitimacy of the association as a communication channel between the District Office and the outsiders in the village. The fact that the requests transmitted through the Association have been largely

granted is an indication of the recognition that the District Office has given the leaders of the Farming Association, and the chairman's familiarity with the officials in the District Office and the attendance of the District officials at the inauguration ceremony are the results of such recognition.

In consequence of his success in establishing a consultation network with the District Office, the chairman of the Farming Association has become a prominent leader of the outsiders in the village. Outsider farmers of the Association believe that their chairman will be more successful in putting their requests to the District Office than either the village representatives or through their own individual efforts. Although they are the formally established communication channel in the village, the village representatives are now seldom asked for help by the outsiders in contacting the District Office whenever they have grievances against the Government's development plans or construction works, thus they are unable to secure advance knowledge of native discontents for the officials in the District Office. Instead the Farming Association, which is a voluntary association the formal goal of which is only to provide welfare and transportation services for the vegetable farmers has become the effective though informal channel for transmitting native discontents to the District Office. The fact that the District Office has recognised this role is

probably due to considering that information about possible discontents arising from the outsiders can be effectively obtained, and that the leader of the Association (who was already a leader among the outsiders) can be relied on to forestall collective opposition action of the outsiders against the District Office's policy. As a result, the chairman of the Farming Association, has successfully emerged as a middleman between the outsider farmers and the District Office. Consequently, the chairman of the Farming Association, being able to offer help in contacting the District Office, which is indeed desired by the members, has become a significant leaders among the outsiders, and has partly superseded the "official" leadership in the village.

Notes

1. Many of the outsiders in the village held an opinion that the village representatives would not eager to help them as they were outsiders and that no benefits could be incurred to the representatives from such efforts.

CHAPTER V

Conclusion

Baker, in his study of a Chinese lineage village in Sheung Shui, predicted that as the percentage of outsiders in the area enlarged and the number of lineage members decreased, the outsiders would consequently be allowed to join in the Village Council, which was the village government, in order to avoid its becoming a less and less representative government (Baker, 1968 p.212). This prediction, however has not come true in the situation in So Kun Wat Village, which is inhabited by both outsiders and pen-t'u-jen. Almost thirty years have passed since the outsiders moved into the village, and the population of this group has by now already outgrown that of the pen-t'u-jen, yet the outsiders are still excluded from participation in the election of the village representatives who are the formal --- in the sense of being officially recognized --- communication channel between the District Office and the whole village. In terms of population figures, the village headmen are in fact unable to justify their leadership roles. Rather, this inequitable representative system is a result of the colonial authorities' giving powerful

support to the pen-t'u-jen. It seems that on the part of the government, in view of the overall political situation of the New Territories, to initiate structural change in order to allow the participation of the outsiders in an institution so completely monopolized by pen-t'u-jen is unnecessary (since the majority of Hong Kong citizens are also not entitled to such a privilege) and undesirable (as it would certainly provide additional unforeseen burdens for the New Territories Administration). The pen-t'u-jen have a strategic influence in development in New Territories since they control land which is central to the development plans of the Hong Kong Government, whereas outsiders usually do not have much land and are unable to exert influence. As a consequence, the indigenous leadership is favored by the politically dominant colonial authority when considering the potential impacts of the two parties upon the development plans. Although the outsiders in So Kun Wat Village are subject to all the diverse impacts of the overall Government policy in the New Territories, they have no share in the village representative system.

Nevertheless, the outsiders in So Kun Wat Village who have resided there for a relatively long period do have a certain degree of cohesion among themselves owing to homogeneity in ethnicity --- a large number of them came from Waichow prefecture --- and common economic interest --- being vegetable farmers. The emergence of the Farming Association is an explicit indication of

this cohesion. The resumption of land in the early seventies highlighted the obvious discrepancy in interest between the pen-t'u-jen and the outsiders, and posed a threat to the common interest of the outsiders. Owing to the discredit of the pen-t'u-jen village representatives, a number of outsider farmers turned to the chairman of the Farming Association for help in approaching the District Office when they had discontents. Thus the action of the Farming Association has in fact bypassed the function of the officially recognized communication channel --- the village representatives; but it is appreciated by the District Office, since an advance information of the local discontent against its policy can thus be efficiently obtained and the existing loophole in the formal communication channel can simultaneously be filled up. Besides, the leader of the Farming Association can be relied on to forestall collective opposition against the policy of the District Office. Outsiders in the village, who are vegetable farmers, have control over a large amount of Crown land in the outer part of the village. If the present trend of development continues in the Tuen Mun area, this land can be critical to further development plans. Intervention in the interest of the outsiders in the form of further land resumption will inevitably happen again and a problematic situation will consequently arise. As native collective opposition against development policy would interfere with the schedule of land resumption

and raise unnecessary embarrassment to the New Territories Administration, the officials of the District Office certainly wish to avoid it. Indeed, it has been the government's policy to utilize the pen-t'u-jen-monopolized traditional institution to help forestall possible collective opposition against the planned development and minimize rural demands directed to the government (Kuan, Lau, 1979). Yet, because of clear discrepancy in interest between themselves and pen-t'u-jen in So Kun Wat Village, together with their organised cohesion in the form of the Farming Association, the outsiders pay little attention to the village representatives at the present time. Instead, now and in the future, mediation among and with outsiders will depend on the existing elite of the outsider group and the previous role of the village representatives will be taken by the chairman of the Farming Association in approaching the District Office on behalf of its members and meeting the requirements of cases transmitted from the District Office --- at least as far as possible. In this way, not only will the Farming Association become an effective communication network to compensate for the existing deficiencies in the village representative system, but also its chairman will thus become a more prominent leader. The chairman, who had already acquired a certain amount of influence among the members through the provision of the Association's services, is now in effect recognized by the District Office

in his role as a communication channel and so he is able to accumulate and utilize the most critical resources in the rural area --- the consultations with the District Office --- for the benefit of members, and reinforce his leadership position in the outsider group.

Throughout the periods of change in the internal power structure of So Kun Wat Village, the leadership of the gentry, fu-laos and directors of the VMCS have successively declined as a result of the structural changes in the social and economic spheres. Only the village representatives, who monopolize the official communication channel between the District Office and the villagers, are able to maintain their leadership through the delicate dispensation of the resources derived from their position among the villagers. Nevertheless, their resources --- advance knowledge of development and of land values and consultative contact with the District Office --- are now only of real use to the pen-t'u-jen, who are now in a more advantaged position as a result of the Government's development plan; they are no longer adequate to give them leadership over the outsider farmers. It is this situation that offered a chance for the chairman of the Farming Association to aspire to greater power, and gave him the opportunity to partly supersede the leadership of the village representatives in the village

Thus a power bifurcation has taken place which offers the outsiders an opportunity to participate in the

native power structure --- de facto if not de jure. The finding here is different from Graham E. Johnson's conclusion that outsiders can never hope to have any of the influence of native leadership until the assumptions of colonial policy are radically altered (Johnson, 1977). However, this situation is a result of the similarity underlying the difference between the outsiders here and the pen-t'u-jen; that is, both of them are in control of large amounts of land --- Crown land and private land --- which are, or will be central to the government's development plans. It is possible that outsiders elsewhere, who mostly do not have such resources, might not hope to enjoy such 'favor' from the colonial authorities. In other words, the prominence of the outsider leadership in So Kun Wat Village is also a result of the intention of the District Office to make use of the existing elite in helping to ensure the harmonious implementation of the land resumption and development plans.

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GLOSSARY

Agriculture and Fisheries Department

漁農署

Board of Directors

理事會

Chan

陳

Chia-Ch'ing

嘉慶

Ching

程

Chu

朱

Chung

鍾

co-operative society

合作社

directors

理事

District Office

理民府

Farming Association

農業協會

feng-shui

風水

fu-lao

父老

Hai-fung

海豐

Hai-sha-jen

海下人

Kum Lam District Vegetable Marketing
Co-operative Society管欖區蔬菜運銷
合作社

Lau

劉

Law

羅

Lee

李

Lufung

陸豐

New Territories Administration

新界民政署

Pang

彭

pen-t'u-jen

本土人

pen-ti-jen

本地人

Sheung Shui

上水

So Kun Wat Village

掃管笏村

Tam Shui

淡水

Tsuen Wan

荃灣

t'sun chang

村長

Tuen Mun

屯門

Tuen Mun Outsider Association

屯門僑居民協會

Tungkwan

東莞

vice village representative

副村代表

village headman

村長

village representative

村代表

Wai Chow

惠州

Wai Chow Prefecture

惠州府

Wai Chow T'ung Hsiang Hui

惠州同鄉會

Wai-ti-jen

外地人

Waiyang

惠陽

Wei-tau-jen

圍頭人

Yuen Long

元朗



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